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SEP 08 2006

REMARKS

Claims 21-23, 25-28, 31-35 and 37 are amended. Claims 21-29 and 31-37 remain in the application. No new matter is added by the amendments to the claims.

The Rejections:

In the Office Action dated June 8, 2006, the Examiner rejected Claims 21-29, 31, and 33-36 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent 2001-294388 (JP `388). The Examiner stated that JP `388 discloses: an elevator car having a wall 8/7 and a door 4; as seen in Figures 3-5, a sealing strip 9 is mounted in a groove formed in the surface of the wall; the sealing strip includes an upper part 9b/c that continuously seals the gap at the sides and top of the door and a lower part 9a between the bottom of the door and the threshold; the sealing strip is hollow and includes a movable wall portion that is moved when compressed air is supplied to the strip via a source 10; and, as seen best in Figure 4, the strip does not extend out of the groove in the relieved state.

The Examiner rejected Claims 32 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP `388. The Examiner stated that changing the shape to a square is not considered inventive. According to the Examiner, Anderson and Pot provide evidence that square inflatable seals are known and, therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the strip square.

Applicants' Response:

Applicants amended the claims to include at least two movable wall portions. The basis for this amendment is found on Page 4, first paragraph and in Fig. 2.

The sealing strip according to present invention exhibits an upper and a lower part (see Fig. 2). The lower part is embedded in the car wall, while the upper part has two walls 41 and 42, which can be reversibly stretched into the gap between the car door and the car wall by inflating the hollow body 8. Due to this geometry and configuration, the sealing strip is very compact and efficient and can react rapidly, when air inflated, since a directional motion only in the direction of the car door is generated. Furthermore, the contact surface at the car door is large and well isolating, thanks to the presence of the two stretched walls 41 and 42.

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The cited reference JP '388 does not disclose at all a sealing strip with the configuration wherein the two walls 41 and 42 can be efficiently stretched towards the car door. JP '388 discloses simply a bag sealing body with a balloon geometry (see Fig. 3, 4 and 5). When the bag of JP '388 is inflated, a very large and not very compact balloon is created. The inflating process is slow and inefficient and requires large spaces, since a motion not only in the direction of the car door is generated, but rather in all radial directions. Furthermore, the contact surface between the balloon and the car door is small and not well isolating, because of the presence of only one spherical wall.

Being aware of JP '388, the man skilled in the art seeking to improve further the isolation properties of the elevator car would be led to increase further the pressure of the air in the sealing bag. He would be therefore led away from present invention, whereby the pressure of the air is not increased, but rather better distributed thanks to the optimized geometry of the sealing strip with two walls.

According to the Examiner, Anderson and Pot provide evidence that square inflatable seals are known and, therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the strip square. However, in each of Anderson and Pot it appears that only the wall facing the surface to be sealed moves.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the above arguments, Applicants believe that the claims of record now define patentable subject matter over the art of record. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.